

1. POLICY FOR PARENT ATTENDANCE



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

TEMPORARY POLICY STATEMENT	
Subject: Process for Parents to Contact and Utilize Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs	Field Operations – Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs
Effective Date: March 23, 2020	

Purpose of Temporary Policy:

The Department of Early Education and Care (“EEC”) hereby sets forth its process for parents to contact and utilize an Exempt Emergency Child Care Program during the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

Background:

Pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order, all licensed child care programs were ordered to be closed in the Commonwealth at 11:59 p.m. on March 22, 2020 in order to confront the spread of the novel coronavirus. However, the Commonwealth is mindful that child care is a critical service and is relied upon by front-line workers addressing the pandemic. In an effort to provide this critical support to front-line workers, medical staff, and others critical to confronting the pandemic, EEC is setting forth this procedure for parents to contact and have their children attend Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs to provide emergency drop-in care for vulnerable children and children of families of essential workers who are needed to address the health, safety, and welfare of the Commonwealth’s residents.

Temporary Policy Statement:

Step 1: Published List of Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs

EEC will publish a list of approved Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs to EEC’s website for parent reference, which can be found here:

https://eeclead.force.com/apex/EEC_ChildCareEmergencyProcedure

This list will be updated regularly, not less than three times per week, with new programs added as they are approved and closed programs removed. Any change in information about a program will be updated as soon as it is practicable.

Step 2: Parent to Contact Program and Arrange for Care

Parents can begin contacting Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs once the list of programs is available. **Parents are required to contact the program to confirm whether there is available capacity to care for the child on the desired day and time, prior to bringing the child to the program.** Programs will be working to ensure that they have available capacity for families who need emergency drop-in child care, but a program cannot guarantee a parent a slot. EEC will be working throughout the State of Emergency to monitor utilization rates the of Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs and adjust distribution of sites accordingly.

A parent should not contact an emergency child care program unless they require emergency, back-up, drop-in care. Priority must be given to children in families working to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the Commonwealth's residents or vulnerable children including but not limited to health care workers, essential state and human service workers, COVID-19 health workers, grocery store and pharmacy employees, emergency response personnel, law enforcement, transportation and infrastructure workers, sanitation workers, DCF-involved families, and families living in shelters. To slow the spread of the coronavirus, all families should keep children out of group care settings to the greatest extent possible. Emergency Child Care Programs are for when all other non-group-care settings have been exhausted and families have no other options.

Parents cannot be charged for utilizing Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs, unless specifically authorized by EEC.

Parents should not consider their children "enrolled" in an Exempt Emergency Child Care Program, as these programs are intended to serve as emergency, back-up, drop-in care. Parents should use these programs only as necessary and not as a formal child care arrangement on a daily basis. Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs are not licensed by EEC and are not subject to licensing regulations.

Step 3: Confirm and Travel to Program to Drop Off Child

Once the Parent has confirmed that there is available care for the child, the parent may travel to the program to drop off the child for care on the date and time arranged. Parents will be required to review and sign documentation available on the EEC website, confirming information about the child and acknowledging that Exempt Emergency Child Care Programs are not subject to EEC Licensing Regulations.

Step 4: Child Attends Program

The child attends the Program and is in the care of the Exempt Emergency Child Care Program during the time requested.

Step 5: Parent Picks Child Up from Program

Parent travels to and picks up child from the agreed-upon time on the days the child is in care.

Parents must make sure to pick up their children at the agreed-upon time.